

AGRiVIEW



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Grants Galore!

Apply For Dairy Funding Through NE-DBIC

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center at VAAFM

The new year is full of funding opportunities through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) with grants open to cow, goat, and sheep dairy farmers, along with processors and producer associations in 11 Northeast states. Learn more about the grants below and see the full funding calendar on our website: agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic

Food Safety & Certification Grant

This grant supports food safety improvements to increase dairy marketability and help you reach new markets. Past grants include



funding for new bottling equipment, development of HACCP plans, and supplies required for an Interstate Milk Shipping license.

Projects should build upon existing state and federal compliance requirements to improve consistency,

production safety standards, and quality of dairy products.

Awards range from \$10,000 - \$40,000 with a 25% required match commitment. Application deadline: January 19, 2023.

Dairy Innovation & Alternative Management Grant

Innovation is key to building enduring farm businesses and a sustainable regional food system. This grant supports the implementation of community- and climate-forward practices and will fund projects that lead to improved ecological and economic outcomes, as well as benefit the broader dairy community.

Awards range from \$15,000 - \$75,000 with a 25% match commitment. Application deadline: February 2, 2023.

Dairy Processor Research & Development Innovation Grant

To meet consumer preferences for local and sustainable products, *continued on page 5*



Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

Vermont recently welcomed the world to Vermont to highlight the growth of the Vermont grape and wine industry. It was an honor to have the Green Mountains host the VitiNord Conference. It brought together dozens from around the United States and a host of countries including many from Canada.

We have tremendous leadership across the Green Mountains including from our growers, wine makers and our researchers like Dr. Terry Bradshaw at the University of Vermont. They are largely responsible for the growth in recent years. It's an impressive team that made it possible to host this International Conference. We were excited to highlight the growth of the Vermont grape and wine industry and the well-

deserved international recognition our vineyards and winemakers have received.

With vineyards and wineries across the state, Vermont is a growing destination for wine-based agritourism. This summer



Vermont hosted an International Conference on Agritourism. More than 50 countries participated and countless vineyards from Vermont were present. We have formed a partnership with New York, Ontario and Quebec with plans to launch a culinary trail in this region. Wine will be on many of the stops.

Vermont's vineyards add beauty to our state's working landscape while helping farmers diversify and keep land in agricultural production. The Agency has invested in grapes and wine over the last decade. The Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program has invested over \$215,000 to support the grape and wine industry. For example, we awarded the University of Vermont Fruit Program to evaluate wine grape cultivars and conduct virus

screenings. Research is critical if we are going to grow the industry here and in our colder climates.

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has supported individual wine businesses to make business improvements and attend trade shows. These investments are important to grow our economy and make it more affordable to do business in Vermont. We encourage all those in the wine or grape industry to contact us for possible programs that might help their operations.

We wish all a productive and prosperous 2023 as we begin another year. We are grateful for all those in agriculture that make our little corner of the world a better place to live, work and play.

Happy New Year! And Cheers!

— Anson Tebbetts, Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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This Month's Recipe

Broccoli Chowder

Serves 4-6. Comforting on a cold evening.

Ingredients

- 3 cups fresh broccoli florets (okay to use frozen)
- 2 cups diced peeled potatoes
- 2 cups water
- 1/3 cup sliced green onions
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese



Directions

1. In a large saucepan, combine the first 6 ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 12-14 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
2. Meanwhile, in another saucepan, melt butter. Stir in flour and nutmeg until smooth. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir into vegetable mixture; heat through. Sprinkle with cheese.



Andy Chamberlin of UVM Extension Launches the Farmer's Share

By Kim Burns, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

“Everyone has a great story to share” said Andy Chamberlin producer of The Farmer's Share. The Farmer's Share is a new podcast series hosted by Chamberlin through the University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association. The podcast follows Chamberlin as he visits different produce growers in the region, spotlighting their unique stories.

By tuning into the Farmer's Share, you can take a tour of various produce farms in the northeast, learn about the individual farmer's experience, and connect with the greater northeast growing community. According to Chamberlin, the in-person format is unique to the Farmer's Share and offers an intimate perspective that other farming podcasts do not. You feel as though you are part of the conversation, whether it's on the farmer's back porch or in a heated hoop house.

The podcast's name is a play on words. Not only do many fruit and



vegetable growers offer community supported agriculture (CSA) shares, but on The Farmers' Share the farmer also shares their knowledge, experiences, and sustainability and success tips. According to

Chamberlin, a valuable component of the Farmer's share is to “capture [the farmer's] stories and knowledge while we can.” A farmer's expertise and knowledge can now be shared with a younger generation of

farmers who are new and beginning. Chamberlin also sees the value of creating a sense of comradery between farmers when you can hear from your growing peers.

On a personal note, Chamberlin has a vested interest in The Farmer's Share as its producer. He grew up on his parents' vegetable farm and has been working for the UVM Extension for the past 5 years, working with mechanical engineering outreach related to produce farming. Before the Farmer's Share, he hosted The AgEngineering Podcast where he shared tools, tips, and techniques for sustainability on the farm. The AgEngineering Podcast officially concluded in September 2022, with The Farmer's Share kicking off in October of that year.

Fruit and vegetable farmers of any scale could benefit from listening to the podcast. To tune in, you can stream The Farmer's Share on any podcast streaming platform, such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. You can also visit the website at www.thefarmersshare.com and follow The Farmer's Share on social media @thefarmersshare to stay up to date.

Live Webinar Series on Farm Succession and Transfer Begins January 18th

By Mike Ghia, VT Farm Viability Program

What is the future of your farm? If you are like most farmers, you are so busy with the day-to-day business of farming you find it difficult to take the time to plan ahead long-term, particularly planning for a transition from one generation to the next. It can be especially challenging during times of financial uncertainty. And it

can difficult if there is not someone immediately lined up to take over the farm. At the same time, you probably have hopes for the future of your farm, and have thought some about what you would like to happen to your business and your land. With sound succession planning with concrete action steps, it is more likely that the goals and desires of all the generations involved can be met, and there is a greater likelihood that the farm will stay in farming.

The “Farm Succession Planning Webinar Series” is for farmers to learn about key issues, tools and resources to help them make informed decisions and take action steps towards transferring their farm to the next generation of their family or a non-family successor. Farmers will learn from professionals who can help in the process and from other farmers. Topics include retirement, financial, and estate planning, taxes, legal entities, and determining

goals for retirement, business transitions, and your land. All generations, including family and non-family members, who may play a role in your farms future are encouraged to attend.

This series is organized by Land For Good, in partnership with the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and will be held on 4 successive Wednesday's 11 am-1pm starting January 18th. For more info and to register, visit <https://landforgood.org/how/training/> to register or call 603-357-1600 or write to info@landforgood.org for more information.

DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Announcing New Organic On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center at VAAFM

In 2021, Horizon Organic and Maple Hill Creamery abruptly announced they were canceling contracts with all their Northeast dairy farms. In total, 135 organic dairy farms across the Northeast found themselves in limbo, unsure whether they'd be able to stay in business when the contracts ended.

As a result of the organic dairy crisis, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center was awarded an additional \$19 million by the USDA to increase resiliency in the organic supply chain. In a continuation of this effort, the NE-DBIC is announcing a new Organic On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant.

This grant will fund the purchase of specialized equipment to help streamline milk pick-up, increase

efficiencies around milk storage, and improve handling for both farmers and their processors. Open to all organic dairy farmers, those who lost contracts will be prioritized to help them successfully transition to new buyers.

Awards will range from \$10,000-

\$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. Total funds available equal \$450,000.

Applications close February 9th. Get all the

details on our website: agriculture.vermont.gov/organic-farm-milk-storage-handling-grant



Community Recovery and Revitalization Program

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development is accepting applications for the Community Recovery and Revitalization Program (CRRP). In 2022, the Vermont Legislature, through Act 183 and 185, appropriated \$40,000,000 from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) coronavirus relief funds for the CRRP grant program. This funding is for infrastructure projects that will spur economic recovery and revitalization to mitigate the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agricultural entities (small businesses, nonprofits, etc) with NAICS code 11 are eligible to apply under the "impacted industries"

track. If your entity is not NAICS code 11 but you are dependent on an agricultural industry for a significant portion of your revenue, and, as a result of this dependency, can demonstrate a significant financial revenue decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you may also be eligible under this track. Entities must have existed prior to January 2020 and have a negative impact from the pandemic.

Eligible projects include safe reopening measures, planned expansion or upgrade of facilities where the project was delayed due to the pandemic, COVID-19 prevention or mitigation tactics, and ventilation systems.

Awards will not exceed the lesser of \$1,000,000 or 20% of total project costs.

Funds are reimbursement-based and can go back to March 2021. Allowable costs include capital investment and infrastructure improvements and related expenses, such as contractor time, engineering plans, and permitting. Funds must be spent

by December 2026. There is no match requirement, although for-profit recipients must provide 10% equity. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and are first-come, first-serve.

Entities in a Qualified Census Tract and those sup-

porting childcare, affordable housing, municipal water supply and wastewater, and other affected industries are also eligible.

For more information, visit the CRRP webpage or email ACCD.CRRP@vermont.gov.



More Snow is Coming, Time to Think About Barn Roof Safety

By Cornell University
Extension

When the snow comes down heavy and hard, it's time for farmers to start thinking about barn roof safety.

Heavy snow can put barn roofs at risk, but snow removal must be performed carefully. Removing snow without the proper approach can actually cause more damage by creating an unbalanced load. Remember, your number one priority must be to protect your own safety!

Farmers are encouraged to consider these safety tips, provided by Cornell University, when considering snow removal from a barn roof.

Do...

- DO consider a systematic approach. You need a plan! For a diagram of the best way to remove snow from your barn structure, see this tip sheet from Cornell
- DO listen for creaking or moaning – if your barn is built from wood, unusual sounds may indicate there's trouble afoot
- DO look for bending or bowing rafters, headers, or columns. There are often visual cues to be found if you look carefully at the structure
- DO ask for help. You can't do this alone. Who is your back up? Is there anyone in your community with expertise

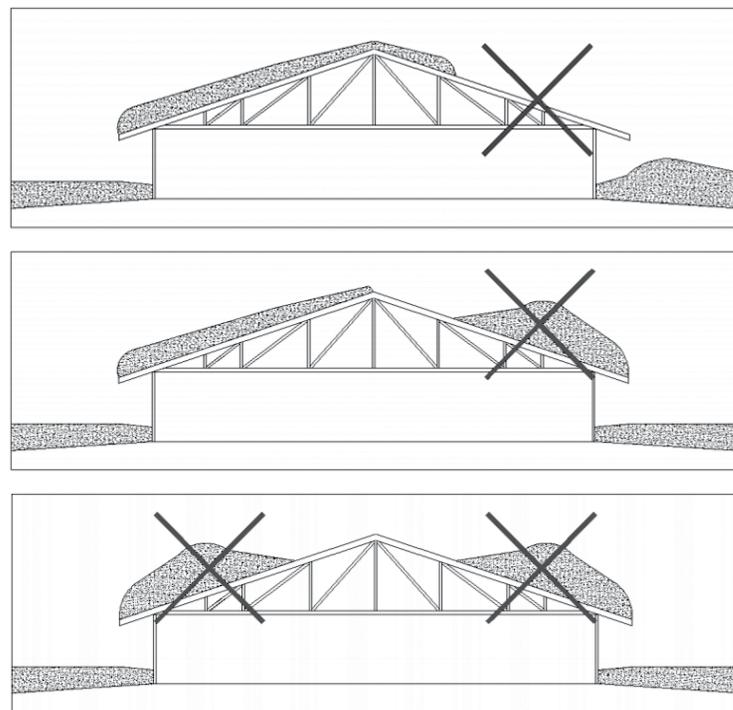
or equipment, who might be willing to help?

Don't...

- DON'T remove snow unequally from the roof. Unbalanced loads can create even more problems.
- DON'T pile snow atop the roof. Do not simply move the snow from one area of the roof to another
- DON'T attempt to clear the snow yourself! Make sure there are others nearby, helping and watching, in the event of a problem

Most importantly, **do not put your own safety at risk.**

For a full overview of the best way to remove snow from a barn roof, visit [http://](http://blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/files/2014/11/SnowRemoval-1f91q43.pdf)



blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/files/2014/11/SnowRemoval-1f91q43.pdf

Vermont farmers are

critical to our landscape, heritage, economy, and communities. We have *none to spare!* Be safe!

Winter Spreading Ban Started December 15

The annual winter manure spreading ban began on Tuesday, December 15 and lasts until April 1. No manure may be spread on fields during this ban, or on frozen, snow-covered or saturated ground outside of this time period. This ban on spreading manure or other agricultural waste through the winter months is designed to protect water quality.

Manure does not soak effectively into frozen, snow-covered or saturated ground. Manure spread during the winter months therefore has a heightened risk of running off to waterways when the snow and ground finally thaws.

An emergency exemption issued by the Secretary of Agriculture for winter manure spreading during the ban or on frozen or snow-covered ground may be considered for emergency situations, such as structural failure of a waste storage facility.

If you anticipate having an issue during the ban, please contact Nate Sands for assistance with planning winter manure management at (802) 224-6850.

Grants Galore!

continued from page 1

this grant offers funding for dairy processors to innovate through research and development. Projects funded through this program will support long term business investments that increase dairy processor business consumer appeal and marketability of value-added dairy products.

Grants will range from \$75,000 to \$250,000 with a 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment required.

Request for Applications will be available on January 10th. Application period is January 26 – March 23, 2023.

Ice Fishing Festival

By the VT Department of Fish & Wildlife

Always wanted to go ice fishing but couldn't find a good excuse to get away? Now we have found that excuse for you: a "Free Ice Fishing Day" on the last Saturday in January.

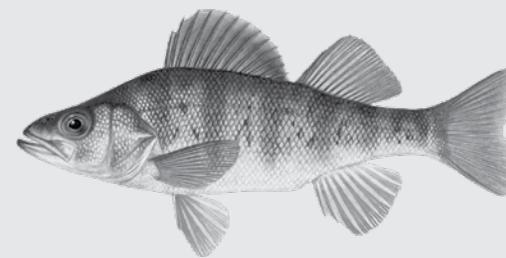
Date: January 28th, 2023

Time: 11:00am-3:00pm

Location: Silver Lake State Park,
20 State Park Beach Rd. Barnard, VT 05031

To register go to <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/event/ice-fishing-festival>

Pre-registration is not required but will save time checking on the day of the event.



VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030: Supporting Future Farmers

Editor's note: This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>

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What's At Stake?

Vermont is facing a dramatic shift in the agricultural sector due to economic and demographic changes. The key to the maintenance and development of the farms



that form the backbone of our rural communities is to support the next generation of farmers. These new and beginning farmers face a number of challenges including shifting markets and production models, increased risk due to climate change, and barriers to accessing land. The types of support that are critical to their success include assistance in identifying and accessing suitable land, development of strong management and production capacity, supportive policies around markets, and access to

capital. The new generation of farmers needs this type of support to create viable farm businesses, to keep the Vermont landscape in active agricultural use, and to preserve the character of our rural communities.

Current Conditions

State and national trends show an aging farmer population, increased land pressure for non-agricultural uses, and a rapidly changing marketplace for agricultural goods. Within Vermont, the conventional dairy sector, which has long been the backbone of the state's agricultural economy, is struggling to maintain viability (see Dairy brief).

The current and future generation of Vermont farmers face a number of significant challenges, including limited markets for local products, increasing land values, increasing production uncertainties due to climate change, and evolving agricultural business models. In addition, starting and growing a farm operation has become increasingly capital intensive in terms of both operating expenses and land purchase. All of these factors combine to make for a very challenging environment for farmers to be successful.

As agricultural production practices and markets shift, accessing land remains one of the most important factors in the success of new and beginning farmers. The decline in the number of dairy farms in the state and adoption of

diversified farming models is changing the types of farmland and infrastructure that are suitable for viable farm businesses. Land conservation initiatives like the

Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV) and the Farmland Access Program at the Vermont Land Trust promote increased affordability and access to farmland to some buyers. These projects are now paired with robust business planning and technical assistance to improve the potential success of the farmer. Although this process improves the potential viability of a new farm, the capacity to support these complex projects is still very limited due to funding constraints.

Despite the challenges faced by new and beginning farmers in Vermont, there are reasons for optimism within the agricultural sector. Vermont's new and beginning farmers are enthusiastic, resilient, and well supported in approaching farming as a business. They are supported by statewide service providers to grow

their management and production capacity toward making sustainable business decisions.

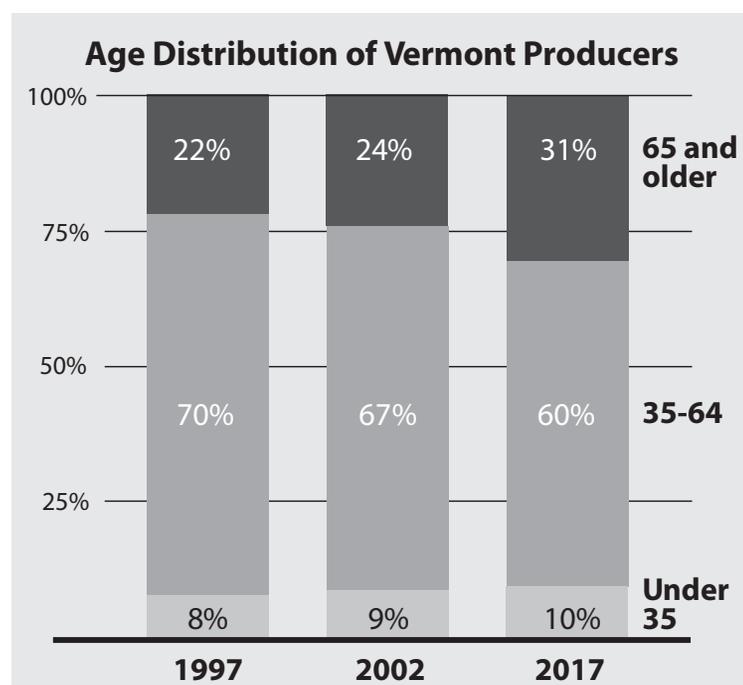
New and Beginning Farmers

Current Conditions

While agriculture in Vermont faces a number of significant challenges, there are still large numbers of new and beginning farmers eager to make farming their life-long livelihood. These diverse and enthusiastic agrarians are learning from other farmers in their community and through business and technical assistance from various service providers, but they face many structural challenges to achieving successful, viable businesses. These challenges include access to capital, access to markets, and the decline of the dairy sector and associated agricultural support services (e.g., large animal veterinarians).

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- New farmers can face saturation in local markets, insufficient price points, and regional markets that are difficult to access.



- 41.6% of farmers in Vermont in 2017 were female, a percentage that has been growing over time.
- In 2017 in Vermont, 1,856 producers (15.1%) had been farming for five years or fewer, and 1,898 (15.4%) had been farming for 6-10 years.
- In a 2017 National Young Farmers Coalition poll, 63% of respondents said they are making or will eventually make sufficient income in farming to meet their life goals.

- Lenders may not understand new farm models, making it difficult for farmers to access capital.
- New farmers may be affected by racial prejudice, student loan debt, lack of off-farm jobs for a partner, and unaffordable health insurance, housing, and child-care.
- Some agricultural support services (e.g., feed dealers) may not have enough farm activity to support their businesses, thus impacting other farms.

Opportunities

- Enthusiasm for socially and environmentally conscious investment can be harnessed to develop new and creative financing tools for operations and land purchase.
- Individuals or groups of producers can develop marketing mechanisms for niche or higher-margin product lines.
- Access to regional metropolitan markets through improved distribution and marketing infrastructure remains a potential area of improvement.

Farmland Access

Current Conditions

As farmer demographics change and agricultural business models shift, access to suitable and affordable farmland is a major concern for the next generation of new and beginning farmers. Using services like Vermont Land Link, a farmland-specific listing and linking service, farmers can identify and assess potential land opportunities for lease or purchase. The Vermont Land Trust's Farmland Access Program is

- 79% of farmland in Vermont does not have an operator under age 35 as of 2017.
- 30% of respondents to a National Young Farmer Coalition survey indicated that land access is preventing them from farming (the most frequently reported barrier).
- The average market value of Vermont farms has increased 13.5% since 2012 to \$620,691 in 2017.

now routinely paired with robust production and financial technical assistance from the Intervale Center, UVM Extension, or other service providers to help new farmers succeed.

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Vermont land costs are high relative to the potential for income generation from agricultural activities.
- Exiting farmers often stay on their land for financial or sentimental reasons. This can force beginning farmers into non-favorable land agreements or struggles to find suitable housing.
- Current farm business models often require less land or different infrastructure than the parcels that are available.
- Potential farm successors do not always have the skill set or financial position to assume management or ownership of larger existing farm operations.

Opportunities

- Many retiring or exiting farmers do not have identified successors, leading to opportunities for new and beginning farmers to access land.
- There could be better utilization of farmland owned by non-farming landowners through lease or eventual purchase.
- New or novel land use models are being devel-

oped, including multiple farm operations co-locating on a single parcel or even shared ownership models.

- The Farmland Access Program and accompanying farm business development technical assistance to accelerate farmland access can be expanded.
- Continue to explore the use of creative landholding and financing mechanisms to assist farmers in land access and purchase.

Supporting Farm Businesses

Current Conditions

Farming today requires a diverse and refined skill-set. As access to viable commodity markets become more difficult, farmers must focus on business management and marketing. They are supported in developing management capacity by business advisors from the Farm Viability Network and production technical assistance from the University of Vermont and producer networks.

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- New markets and production models require a much higher level of business management skills from farmers to communicate with customers and manage day-to-day operations.
- As production models shift away from estab-

lished commodity models, there is an increased need for applied research and education around alternative products and markets.

- Farmers with limited capital have difficulty accessing and purchasing land.

Opportunities

- If continued, financial support for, and development of, the Farm Viability Network and increased business assistance for farmers will build their planning, decision-making, and management capacity (see Business & Technical Assistance brief).
- Targeted applied research would improve production and financial knowledge in specific sectors, including grass-fed beef, maple, vegetable, and diversified production.
- Support for producer organizations would increase education and marketing efforts to improve access to markets. Development of informal farmer networks through cohort-based support can strengthen producer communities as they take risks and try new enterprises.

Summary

Supporting new and beginning farmers is essential to the long-term success of Vermont's agricultural sector and the culture of our rural communities. Expanding existing business and technical assistance along with the right match of capital can improve farmers' ability to access suitable, high-quality farmland and ensure they develop successful farm businesses.

These efforts can be paired with policy mechanisms, alternative financing mechanisms, and enriched market research opportuni-

ties to incentivize farm business development.

Recommendations

- Expand financial support for Vermont Land Trust's land conservation and transition efforts, including buy-lease sell opportunities, Farmland Access Program, and land conservation.
- Support regional market development efforts, especially entrepreneur-driven aggregation and distribution activities. Develop co-marketing enterprises that allow for local sales associated with a specific farm brand while also providing aggregated regional market access.
- Increase funding support for Vermont Housing and Conservation Board Farm & Forest Viability Program and UVM Extension's production technical assistance for farmers. This should include increasing funding for one-on-one technical assistance, bolstering producer associations, and increasing directed applied research and education.
- Increase the development of non-traditional land access and financing models, including collaborative/co-located farms, local low-cost financing options, and programming for underserved populations.
- Increase education and advocacy efforts to inform state and federal programs about new and emerging business models. Involve farmers and business assistance providers in the development and implementation of state and federal regulatory, conservation, and financing programs.

Grantee Spotlight

Dorset Peak Jerseys Advances Grazing and Business Management

By Kim Burns, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

“I’m interested in innovative ways to feed animals” said Caleb Smith of Dorset Peak Jerseys in Danby, Vermont. Smith runs the 350-acre dairy farm managing 60 milking cows while also raising beef cattle and sheep. In 2020, he joined the Dairy Farm Transition to Grazing cohort, led by UVM grazing specialist Cheryl Cesario. The technical assistance, funded through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), helps farmers build their grazing knowledge and skills through a combination of direct one-on-one support and peer networking.

Dorset Peak Jerseys was one of dozens of Northeast regional dairy farms that received support in developing grazing management systems from the cohort-based technical assistance model. “It’s easy to put your head down and do the work but the opportunities to see how other people solve problems is pretty profound,” Smith said, noting the benefit of learning from other members of the cohort. The supportive nature of the group created the perfect breeding ground to offer solutions to head-scratching situations.

As a participant in the Dairy Farm Transition to Grazing cohort, Smith



Dorset Peak Jerseys enjoying their summer feed.

received funds through the contract to attend the Ranching for Profit program in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma from April 24th – May 1st, 2022. There, he gained expertise in grazing principles and business strategies, learned about the true cost of storing feed vs. the low overhead and

high returns of grazing, and reevaluated his equipment to sell what no longer serves his operation.

Since Cesario’s pilot program in 2020, the Dairy Farm Cohort Technical Assistance Contract has expanded to include forage and non-traditional management styles. To date, the

program has funded seven additional cohorts across the Northeast through Cooperative Regions of Organic Producer Pools (CROP), Conservation Performance LLC, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), University of Maine

Cooperative Extension, and University of Vermont Extension.

The fifth round of cohort-based technical assistance contracts are currently underway. Learn more about the program at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants/cohort-dairy-technical-assistance-contract>.

Vermont Pay For Performance Program Application Opens January 2

By Brodie Haenke, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Farmers interested in participating in the Vermont Pay For Performance (VPFP) program will be able to submit applications starting January 2, 2023 by visiting agriculture.vermont.gov/VPFP. The application period will close January 20, 2023.

The Vermont Pay for Performance program provides annual performance-based payments to Vermont farmers for reducing phosphorus losses from their agricultural fields. First time enrollees, regardless of their demonstrated phosphorus reductions, are eligible for an additional initial data entry payment of \$15 per acre they enroll in the program (up to \$4,000).

To be eligible for the

VPFP program, farms must manage crop, hay or pasture land, ensure their farm business is registered with the USDA Farm Service Agency, have updated maps for all their fields, and have an up-to-date Nutrient Management Plan that meets the Required Agricultural Practices for their farm size, which includes having up-to-date soil and manure tests for all sources.

Interested farms should

recognize that this is an innovative and performance-based program which gives you the potential to learn more about the outcomes of your farm management and to earn high annual payments but is data-driven so requires good records/data management.

For more information, please contact Brodie Haenke at Brodie.haenke@vermont.gov or call 802-636-7852.

UVM Grows Vermont's Saffron Industry Through the Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

By Kim Burns, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

In 2020, The University of Vermont (UVM) received a Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) award to develop Vermont's saffron industry as a high-value crop for Vermont growers. Researchers Drs. Bruce Parker and Margaret Skinner have been studying the lucrative spice at UVM for the past seven years. The researchers have created a compelling case for Vermont farmers to consider adding saffron to their business offerings.

Saffron comes from the flower of a purple, fall-blooming crocus (*Crocus sativus*). The spice itself is the thread-like, orange stigma of the flower. It is harvested by separating the petals and stamens by hand. Vermont saffron is currently being sold retail for \$20-75 per gram, making it the most expensive spice in the world. It is used frequently in Mediterranean dishes and as a medicinal herb.

With the help of SCBGP funding in 2017, Parker and Skinner studied how to grow saffron successfully in the field in Vermont's cold climate. Now, they have broadened their work to conduct outreach to growers and to develop a saffron enterprise budget, which helps growers determine the revenue potential of this high value crop based on the income and expenses related to



growing saffron.

Parker and Skinner believe that growers of specialty crops like fruits and vegetables could diversify their production while increasing revenue by growing saffron. Saffron can be grown both inside high tunnels and outside in the field. During the growing season, saffron is low maintenance. The beds occasionally need to be weeded and protected from wildlife pressure. Harvest takes place for a few weeks during October and November. The high price of saffron comes from the intense labor demands for harvesting and processing the spice, though when averaged over the entire crop growing season, it may not be more labor intensive than high-tunnel tomatoes.

To date, Parker and Skinner have established a network of saffron growers across nine out of Vermont's

fourteen counties to expand production and encourage exchange among novice and experienced saffron growers. They have hosted educational programs online and on site at saffron farms to increase grower knowledge about cultivation, harvest, post-harvest handling and marketing.

Parker and Skinner have surveyed saffron growers for their enterprise budgets and

compared the data with the Saffron Center enterprise budget to determine the costs and potential economic returns for growing saffron in Vermont. They collected and analyzed data on customer demand for Vermont-grown saffron in the restaurant industry, the health and beauty product sectors, and at the individual household level.

Parker said, "The number



of saffron growers continues to increase, slowly but steadily. That has been our goal. From the beginning we have encouraged growers to start small with saffron, and if it is the right crop for them, then they could expand production. This has ensured that they don't invest heavily in a crop before they are ready."

In the final months of the project, Parker and Skinner will hold several grower workshops either online or in person to further strengthen North American saffron production and to support Vermont growers. The UVM saffron website will also get updated to ensure that all the current resources are accessible. They will also conduct a grower survey to get a better idea of the status of Vermont's saffron production.

According to Parker, there is a lot still to do to strengthen North American saffron production. First, building a market for North American saffron is critical. They will also continue to perfect cultivation practices that promote high yields in Vermont. Parker and Skinner plan to apply for more funding to further this research initiative.

To learn more about growing saffron, ongoing research, or other related initiatives, sign up for the North America Center for Saffron Research & Development's listserv, Saffronnet. Send an email to miskinner@uvm.edu to join the listserv.

Federal Grants for Vermont Agriculture Entities

Below are summaries and contact information for the Agency's Working Lands program and Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center funding, as well as the Agency of Commerce & Community Development's Community Recovery and Revitalization Program and Vermont Economic Development Authority's Forgivable Loan program.

	Community Recovery and Revitalization (Agency of Commerce and Community Development)	Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center - Various (Agency of Agriculture)	Grant Application Support
Eligible Applicants	Impacted industry (Including a business with Agriculture NAICS Code 11 or dependent on Agriculture) or Qualified Census Tract	Dairy farmers, processors, and support organizations for cow, goat, and sheep dairy	Agency of Agriculture partners and resources for Vermont businesses: agriculture.vermont.gov/development/business-planning-assistance , including: Farm and Forest Viability Program (802) 828-1098 or vhcb.org/viability Provides business advising and networking.
Eligible Projects	Impacted industries track: reopening, facility upgrade/expansion, disease mitigation or ventilation systems Qualified Census Tract: disease prevention, ventilation, capital investments, rehabilitation of properties, façade or vacant properties	Multiple opportunities, including: Food Safety and Certification, Farm Innovation, Processor Expansion, Organic On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling, Processor Innovation, and Marketing and Branding	Regional Development Corporations (802) 585-8225, oraccd.vermont.gov/economic-development/resources/rdc Provides local knowledge and assistance. Vermont Small Business Development Center (802) 728-9101, or vtsbdc.org . Provides expertise and advising to business owners
Due	Rolling	Varies	UVM Extension Agriculture Business Programs (802) 476-2003, corinne.cooper@uvm.edu Provides one-to-one, small group and online learning opportunities that enhance decision-making and viability
Project Length	Through December 2026 (some funding can cover expenses from March 2021)	Varies	
Funding Amount	Up to \$1 million or 20% of project costs	Varies	
Full Details	accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/funding-incentives/community-recovery-and-revitalization-program-business-and-nonprofits	agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/grants	Loan Opportunities
Contact	ACCD.CRRP@vermont.gov	Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov 802-585-4571	Vermont Economic Development Authority Short Term Forgivable Loan: https://www.veda.org/financing-options/other-financing-option/forgivable-0 flp@veda.org



CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Agr.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

4-year-old angus bull for sale and 6-7-month-old steers and heifers for sale. 802-558-8196 (2)

Two Jersey heifers for sale.

Both bottle fed and halter trained. "Charlotte" #68876, born June 29, 2021, sire - "Reckless" "Butterscotch" - #68960, born in early July 2021, sire - "Whistler" \$1000 each Email - greatbrooknursery@gmail.com, or call 802-454-1856. (2)

Employment

Equipment Operator. Crop Production Assistant. CSA Coordinator & Wash Pack Manager. All positions with details at root5farm.com (5)

Equipment

Delaval 1250-gal Bulk Tank. Patz Gutter Cleaner-Counterclockwise, approximately 350 ft of chain. 7630 John Deere Tractor New in 2007 - 3500 hrs. IVT Transmission - Economy PTO Active Seat - Suspended Front End.

AX10BIB Tires - Rear View Camera. 835 John Deere MoCo Mower - Center Pivot New in 2008 - 1000 RPM PTO 11' 6" Cutting Swath. Anderson Bale Wrapper New in 2014 Model RB680 - Honda Engine Handheld Remote Control. Meyers VB440 Vertical Beater Manure Spreader New in 2018 Call 802-563-2332 or email hazelgreavestaxservice@gmail.com (1)

Tri- axle equipment hauling trailer with pintel hitch. Steel body 8' by 16' with steel frame and treated wood deck. Some rust in frame. Registered in Vt until 9/23. Good rubber. spare tire, pickup pintel hitch, ramps included. \$950 obo. Call or text 802-291-4525 (3)

1) Cheese Making Equipment: Copper Vat, 2 pile presses and micro perfs, including all the associated miscellanea required to make an award-winning alpine style cheese. Sold on site. 2) Bison Trail Hand Stock Trailer. Looks rough; still tough, we need something bigger. Sold on site. North Pomfret, VT info@ThistleHillFarm.com. 802-47-1884 (4)

4.5 ton grain bin, 6.5 ton grain bin, (2) 8 ton grain bins priced to sell. 38 John Deere hay elevator. 16 ft New Holland hay elevator. 802-624-0143. (5)

Meyers Snow plow 8'6" wide \$800. 7 yard dump body on INK Truck \$1500. 802-558-0166 (5)

Gehl 5640 skid steer-82 HP-2 speed -New Tires Has steel Tracks -2675 Hrs' \$19,995 (5)

Hay, Feed & Forage

400 Wrapped Bales Available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. Call 802-446-2791(2)

Certified Organic wrapped round bales for sale. approx 50%dry matter. Have forage sample results for 3rd cut, \$45,00/ 50.00 per bale



depending on which hay is taken. Call or text 1-802-210-5279 (5)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY
June cut Hay, Never wet, 4' X 5' Round Bales, \$35/bale loaded, Cash/good check only, Westford, Ray @802-355-2930 (5)

FRANKLIN COUNTY
200 tons certified Organic corn silage stored in an ag bag. Will load for you. 180 wrapped 4X4 certified organic round bales 18% protein - price negotiable. Highgate Center, VT 802-868-7535 If no answer, please leave a message. (1)

Certified organic wrapped round bales. The hay is dry, or close to dry. We have forage sample results if interested. Trucking can be arranged. \$45-55/bale depending on which hay is taken. 802-752-5669 (1)

ORANGE COUNTY
Large square bales. 1st, 2nd and 3rd cutting plus mulch bales. Wrapped and dry. 1000+ available. Some round bales available too. 802-236-7741 or csfarm1@gmail.com (2)



WASHINGTON COUNTY
100+ 4x4 wrapped round bales \$50 each 802-793-3511 (2)

Small square bales - 1st cut \$6.00 or less for quantity. 802-793-3511 (4)

Wanted

Co-producer wanted on an organic livestock farm in Danville, Vt. Looking for someone interested in starting their own enterprise with the opportunity to market through our on-farm store. Would barter/hire for assistance with ongoing operations. Currently have capacity to house extra cattle and would entertain other plant and animal production ideas as well. Check out Vt. Landlink listing for Lewis Creek Jerseys for more details. Email badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call Vince at 802-748-8461. (2)

JD 720 diesel with pony motor start. Looking for Serial # 7226525. Call or text 802-855-0446 (2)

Fahr KH-4S tedder for parts. Contact Dan @ 802 482-2047 (2)

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our *Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses* webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

Applications for a One-Time \$600 Pandemic Relief Payment Open in March 2023

By Juana Lopez, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

As the new year has begun, farm and food workers can begin applying for a one-time \$600 pandemic relief payment through the Pasa Sustainable Agriculture starting on March 2023.

On September 7th, 2021, The U.S Department of Agriculture created a new Farm and Food Relief grant program to relief costs from personal, family, or living expenses, related to covid-19 pandemic such as personal protective equipment, dependent care, and expenses associated to quarantines (USDA 2021). The

USDA opened applications for this grant in order to partner up with non-profit organizations, state agencies, and tribal entities that would make sure that the grant money would be reimbursed and reach farmworkers and meatpackers for up to \$600 in COVID-19 expense.

Then on October 25th, 2022, The USDA selected 14 non-profits and one tribal entity for the Farm and Food Workers Relief Program. This program provides about \$665 million in funds to state agencies, Tribal entities and nonprofits to farm or meat workers. At the height of the pandemic, where much of the world worked remotely at home, these



group of farmers and workers continued to work and provide food for the country. One of the non-profits that was selected was the Pasa Sustainable Agriculture which covers 14 states including Vermont.

Pasa Sustainable Agriculture is a nonprofit organization that helps

administer farmer training, research, policy, peer education, networking and many more. In order to apply for these relief payments, Pasa is currently only accepting applications from farmworkers and meatpacker workers. These applications will be opened in March 2023 and will be

accepted until July 2024.

Eligible workers will need to submit their name, address, place of employment and proof that they worked during the COVID-19 pandemic. When approved, eligible workers will receive their \$600 payment by check, ACH direct deposit, if applying in person (Pasafarming.org). These applications will become available in English and Spanish.

For more information on how to apply for the grant, contact info@pasafarming.org or call (814)-349-9856. For additional information, please visit: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/> or <https://pasafarming.org/relief>

Grow Produce?

VERMONT
PRODUCE
PROGRAM

Sign up for the Vermont Produce Portal

Request a Free On-Farm Food Safety Assessment

Access Produce Safety Improvement Grants

Early registration for Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training

AGRICULTURE.VERMONT.GOV/PRODUCE



Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round

Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley
Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov
 802-828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour
Mary.Montour@vermont.gov
 802-461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett
Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov
 802-522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos
Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov
 802-461-3814

Phil Wilson
Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov
 802-505-5378

January Community Supported Agriculture Grant

Reimbursement for the cost of community supported agriculture (CSA) shares for early childcare providers and afterschool programs.

Gina Clithero
Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov
 802-585-6225

January

Dairy Processor Innovation Grant

Grants for long-term business investments that increase processor business consumer appeal and marketability of value-added product

Laura Ginsburg
laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov
 802-522-2252

Kathryn Donovan
kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov
 802-585-4571

January

Dairy Product Packaging Innovation Grant

Tiered grants for specialized equipment needed to increase processing capacity of regionally produced milk.

Laura Ginsburg
laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov
 802-522-2252

Kathryn Donovan
kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov
 802-585-4571

January

Food Hub Infrastructure Support

Grants to expand capacity and market access for Vermont's nonprofit food hubs.

Julia Scheier
Julia.Scheier@vermont.gov
 802-522-7042

January

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Grants for collaborative projects to benefit multiple fruit, vegetable, honey, maple, hops, Christmas tree, or nursery crop producers or organizations.

AGR.SpecialtyCrops@vermont.gov
 802-522-7811

January

Trade Show Assistance Grants

Funding for food and forestry businesses to help identify, plan, exhibit, and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state and virtual trade shows.

Kristen Brassard
kristen.brassard@vermont.gov
 802-522-3742

Agency Contact Numbers

To help you find the right number for your question, please consult the list below. You are always welcome to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	802-461-6798
Animal Health	802-828-2421
Business Development.	802-828-1619
Dairy	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide .	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime.	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection	802-828-2426
Produce Program	802-522-7811
VT Agriculture & Environmental Lab . . .	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports.	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures	802-828-2433
Working Lands.	802-917-2637



VHCB Water Quality Grants Available for Vermont Farms

by Liz Gleason, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, has grant funds available for on-farm capital improvement projects that have a positive impact on water quality. Eligible farmers can apply for a Water Quality Grant, which provides \$5,000 to \$40,000 in funding. Applications are due by January 27, 2023. Viability staff are hosting a virtual information session to answer questions on Tuesday, January 10 from 10am-12pm.



More information, eligibility requirements, applications, and information to join the information sessions are available on the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program Website at: [https://](https://vhcb.org/WQG)

vhcb.org/WQG. Water Quality Grants help farmers make capital improvements that reduce non-point source pollution through projects that improve manure and nutrient management. These

projects aim to advance Vermont's water quality goals and also support the long-term success of farm enterprises. Construction, renovation, infrastructure, and in some cases, equipment projects are eligible.

The grants assist with the costs of improvements required to comply with regulations and are designed to complement existing federal & state programs.

These grants are funded by the State of Vermont with Federal American Rescue Plan Act Funds.

When Jon & Jeff Audy took over their family farm in New Haven, they pivoted the business from dairy to cropping. At first, they were limited in their planting equipment and had to either use older retrofitted equipment or hire out. With a \$39,500 VHCB Water Quality Grant supplemented by funds from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets' CEAP grant, the Audy's were able to purchase a no-till planter. Now able to do their own planting, they've expanded their no-till practices to 200 additional acres. The new planter has saved time, increased yields, and cultivated healthier soils in the Champlain Valley.

"The new equipment provides a lot of flexibility for us and it's enabling us to meet our goals. The grant application process was convenient and a great opportunity — we know that no-till practices are good for the soil once you learn how to do it. We know it's the right thing to for our land and the business, [and] we've seen the benefits" says Jeff Audy.

For questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact: Betsy McGavisk by email to Betsy@VHCB.org or by calling 802-828-5562.

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Acorn Food Hub, of Middlebury, Vermont to buy/sell and transport milk, cream, cultured products, butter, cheese, and ice cream products within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by March 15, 2023.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Farm to Cheese, LLC, of Underhill Center, Vermont to process and buy/sell cheese products within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by March 15, 2023.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

VEDA Short Term Forgivable Loan Program

By Vermont Economic Development Authority

Section 47 of Act 183 (S.11), enacted during the 2022 legislative session, created the VEDA Short Term Forgivable Loan Program to support businesses experiencing continued working capital shortfalls as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. VEDA was appropriated \$19.0 million from Vermont's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to make loans to businesses that meet the eligibility criteria of the program.

The VEDA Short Term Forgivable Loan Program will provide financial assistance to businesses that continue to experience current and on-going economic harm due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of November 1, 2022, the program is open to all business sectors. Please submit applications to flp@veda.org.

Please note: Businesses (including sole proprietors and not for profits) working in the arts, culture, and creative economy sectors may be eligible for a Creative Futures Grant from the Vermont Arts Council. Please visit their webpage here for additional information.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this program, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

Businesses located in Vermont with fewer than 500 employees (includes sole proprietors and not-for-profits).

Businesses that were in operation (or had taken substantial steps toward becoming operational) as of March 13, 2020;

Businesses that can demonstrate and attest to economic harm caused by or exacerbated by the pandemic and such economic harm is ongoing.

Economic harm defined as the cumulative reduction in Adjusted Net Operating Income in calendar years 2020 and 2021 compared with 2019, of at least 22.5%.

The FLP Calculator Tool, downloaded as part of the application package, will help determine your eligibility, simply by inputting your previous Covid relief grants received and a few details from your business tax returns from 2019, 2020, and 2021. Applications or questions may be directed to flp@veda.org.

Eligible Use of Proceeds

The Forgivable Loans can be used to pay for eligible operating expenses, but not for capital expenditures.

Eligible operating expenses include but are not limited to payroll, mortgage interest, rent, utilities and other operating costs. There is no specific percentage required on payroll costs.

Owners' compensation is an eligible use of loan

proceeds, however the forgivable portion of owners' compensation is limited to the lesser of \$100,000 per year per owner, or the amount of annual owners' compensation paid in 2019.

Determination of Loan Amount

The FLP Calculator Tool will calculate an estimated loan amount. As directed by the legislative intent of this program, the FLP Calculator Tool places emphasis on current and on-going financial needs. Your business' 2022 financial data is critical because the formula for the estimated loan amount places more weight on the most current financial data compared to prior periods.

In addition, the maximum loan will be the lesser of (1) \$350,000; (2) six-months of operating expenses; or (3) the cumulative reduction in Adjusted Net Operating Income in years 2020 and 2021.

If a business has seasonal influences, please provide financial data from the first six-months of 2019 for a comparable period.

Final Loan Amount will be determined by VEDA after taking all relevant information into consideration.

Note: The Estimated Loan Amount shown in the lower left-hand box in the FLP calculator Tool is only an estimate. The final loan amount will be determined by VEDA after taking all

relevant information into consideration and will be communicated to you directly from a VEDA Staff member.

Loan Forgiveness

Borrowers will have 12 months from the date of loan funding to apply for forgiveness.

Loan Forgiveness will be determined based upon documentation submitted showing that the loan was used to pay for eligible operating expenses during the 12 months following the loan disbursement date.

Application for loan forgiveness will be posted to this page at a later date.

Loan Terms

Collateral: None

(Unsecured)

Interest Rate: 0%

Fees: None

Personal Guarantees: Yes – from any 20% or more owner. (Does not apply to not-for-profit businesses.)

Term: Up to 24 months with 1st 12 month no payments. If loan is not fully forgiven during initial 12 months, the loan converts to a 12-month, fully amortizing loan at 0% interest.

Expectation: Loan proceeds will be used for eligible operating expenses, resulting in full forgiveness.

Application Process

Please download a complete application package here. Any questions and applications may be directed to flp@veda.org.

Applicants are highly encouraged to seek technical assistance (TA) for determination of eligibility prior to applying. Information on TA provider(s) is available from the Vermont Small Business Development Center. They can be reached at 802-728-9101.

CSFO Reminder: Annual Certification Forms Are Due January 31, 2023

Any farm that has 50 acres or more of annual crops, houses 50 or more mature dairy cows, or 75 cattle, heifers, veal calves, cow/calf pairs, or youngstock, or 40 horses, or a combination of animals with a total live weight that equals more than 90,000 pounds is a CSFO and must register annually with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Visit www.agriculture.vermont.gov/csfo to learn more and to fill out an online or print version of the Annual Certification Form.

Requesting Applications for Vermont Businesses to Vend at the Big E

By Kristen Brassard, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) is pleased to invite Vermont businesses to apply to vend inside the Vermont Building at the 2023 Big E. The Vermont Building is one of six New England buildings on the Avenue of the States at the Big E, a 17-day fair and exposition that takes place each September in West Springfield, MA. During this event, which brings in approximately 1.6 million people each year, the Vermont Building hosts a variety of Vermont food and retail businesses which showcase the best of what our state has to offer.

This annual event provides a unique regional marketing opportunity to Vermont businesses, helps to elevate the Vermont brand, and supports the Vermont economy. Booth spaces are offered for both retail and food/beverage products. There are booth spaces for the entirety of the 17-day fair, for 8-9 day rotating

spots, and occasionally for 5-7 days. While most booths are inside, there are additional spaces on the grounds for products deemed an appropriate fit. New this year, we will also be accepting applications from food truck vendors who would like to sell their products on the Vermont Building grounds.

Any business or organization will be considered that is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State, has been in business for over one year, and is in good standing with the State of Vermont. VAAFAM has identified the following product priorities for the Vermont Building for 2023: (1) Products that use Vermont-sourced ingredients and/or materials; (2) Vermont-made cosmetics/beauty products; (3) Vermont-made pottery; (4) children's toys and games; (5) glass products; (6) producer associations interested in representing a variety of producers from their industry; and (7) products that align with regional/national trends.

The Request for Applications (RFA) for this

opportunity will be released on January 3rd. Visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/bigevendor> for more

information.

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact Kristen Brassard at

kristen.brassard@vermont.gov or by calling 8002-522-3742.



A large crowd passing through the Vermont Building at the Big E.

Certified Custom Applicator Operating Fees Due January 31, 2023

All owner/operators or full-time custom applicators must be certified with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (Agency) to operate within the state of Vermont. Each year operators must meet educational requirements and submit an annual operating fee of \$30.00 to maintain certification and a license. The deadline to submit this operating fee is January 31, 2023.

All companies that employ certified custom manure applicators as well as all self-employed certified custom manure applicators will receive a renewal notice and form in the mail along with information regarding each applicator's progress toward meeting educational requirements. If you should have received this mailing and did not, contact the Agency at (802) 828-2431.

To learn more about the Certified Custom Applicator Program, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/custom-applicator or contact Jenn LaValley at (802) 828-2431.



	TAX PLANNING & PREPARATION ** Call today for a 2021 Tax Consultation **
	KEVIN CHANNELL 802-249-7384 Kevin@FarmAndForestServices.com www.FarmAndForestServices.com
	
	VERMONT LICENSED REALTOR ** Call today for Farm and Real Estate Services **